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AMENDMENT

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph 14 as follows:

Figure [[4]]4A illustrates one embodiment of a retainer in the resilient assembly of Figure 1;

Please insert the following paragraph after paragraph 14:

Figure 4B illustrates one embodiment of the other retainer in the resilient assembly of Figure 1;

Please amend paragraph 21 as follows:

Figures ~~1 to 4~~1, 2, 3, 4A and 4B illustrate a resilient assembly 30 according to one embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, the resilient assembly 30 has first and second spring retainers 32A and 32B and a resilient member [[44]] in the form of a helical compression spring 44. Note that the present invention is not limited to an assembly using helical compression springs 44 as the resilient member[[44]]. Thus, for example, a cylindrical tube or solid blocks of resilient material could replace the helical compression spring 44 as the resilient member. It will be appreciated that the terms "resilient member," "spring," "spring retainer," and "spring seat" do not limit the present application to using helical compression springs, or even springs in general, as the resilient member.

Please amend paragraph 22 as follows:

In the embodiment shown in Figures ~~1 through 4~~1, 2, 3, 4A and 4B, the spring retainers 32A and 32B are identical and are formed via any known process (e.g., via stamping) from a sheet material, such as sheet metal (e.g., sheet steel). Although the spring retainer 32A is described, it is to be understood that the spring retainer 32B includes the same features. The spring retainer 32A is generally elongate and has a hole 33A at one end. During use, the hole 33A acts as a load application feature (in conjunction with a hole 33B) to apply tensile and compressive loads to the resilient assembly 30.

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Please amend paragraph 23 as follows:

There is also provided an H-shaped recess 38A defined by edges 39A and projections 40A and 42A. In the illustrated embodiment, one of the projections 42A is longer than the other projection 40A. The recess 38A defines a spring ~~seats~~seat 43A at the ends of the longer legs of the H-shaped recess 38A, and a spring ~~seats~~seat 41A at the end of the shorter legs of the H-shaped recess 38A. The distance between the spring seats 41A and 43A is defined as a distance D. From the perspective shown in the Figures, the left hand portion of the H-shaped recess 38A defines a slot 34A of length D and the right hand portion of the H-shaped recess 38A defines a slot 36A also of length D. The free, uncompressed length of the helical compression spring 44 is larger than the length D.

Please amend paragraph 24 as follows:

It can be seen from Figures 1 and 3 that the resilient assembly 30 is assembled with the spring retainers 32A and 32B being placed against each other in a substantially facing relationship but having their appropriate holes 33A and 33B disposed remotely from each other. In this way, the first slot 34A of the first spring retainer 32A is aligned with the ~~first~~second slot 36B of the second spring retainer 32B, and the second slot 34B of the first spring retainer 32B is aligned with the ~~second~~first slot 36A of the second spring retainer 32A.

Please amend paragraph 25 as follows:

It can also be seen that the first spring seat 41A substantially faces the second spring seat 41B, thus allowing the helical compression spring 44 to be positioned between the two spring seats 41A and 41B. Furthermore, the helical compression spring 44 and the spring seats 41A and 41B are positioned between the holes 33A and 33B~~; that~~. That is, the holes 33A and 33B are substantially in line with the spring seats 41A and 41B and are also in line with the helical compression spring 44.

Please amend paragraph 26 as follows:

Diametrically opposing portions of the coils of the helical compression spring 44 sit in appropriate slots 34 ~~and 36~~A and 34B, and 36A and 36B of the spring retainers 32A and 32B, respectively. Because the free, uncompressed length of the helical compression spring 44 is larger than the length D, it is apparent that the resilient assembly 30 as shown in its "rest" position of Figure 1 is preloaded. Thus, when the resilient assembly 30 is put under tension by applying a tensile load to the holes 33A and 33B in the directions of the arrow F, the resilient assembly 30 will only start to extend once the preload force in the helical compression spring 44 has been overcome. Similarly, if a compressive force is applied to the holes 33A and 33B, the resilient assembly 30 will only start to compress once the preload force has been overcome.

Please amend paragraph 27 as follows:

Figure 2 shows a resilient assembly 30 that has been extended by the application of an appropriate force. It can be seen that while the resilient assembly 30 as a whole has been extended, the helical compression spring 44 has actually been compressed due to the action of the projections 40A~~,B~~ and 40B and 42A~~,B~~ and 42B on the helical compression spring 44.

Please amend paragraph 28 as follows:

Figures 4A and 4B show the spring retainers 32A and 32B, respectively. Figure 4A shows a gap GA between the ends of the projections 40A and 42A. As mentioned above, one of the projections 40A is shorter than the other projection 42A. This is advantageous because when the resilient assembly 30 is in the rest position, as shown in Figure 1, the longer projection 42A overlaps with the shorter projection 42B, thus ensuring that helical compression spring 44 remains in its correct position. This is most easily seen in Figure 6, which shows an exploded view of the spring retainers 32A and 32B in their correct longitudinal position when the resilient assembly 30 is in its rest condition. It can be seen that the spring seats ~~41A,B~~41A and 41B are aligned and that the gap GA is offset from the gap GB. The figure shows the holes 33A and 33B spaced apart by a distance L which, in view of Figure 1, corresponds to the at rest working length of the resilient assembly 30.

Please amend paragraph 29 as follows:

When the resilient assembly 30 is extended as shown in Figure 2, the gap g between the ends of the projections 42A and 42B is smaller than the gap GA. Thus, even when extended, the helical compression spring 44 is unlikely to escape from the recesses 38 through the gap g.

Please amend paragraph 30 as follows:

The spring retainers 32A and 32B and helical compression spring 44 are assembled as follows to form the resilient assembly 30. Figure 5 shows an exploded view of the spring retainers 32A and 32B in the correct longitudinal relative position for incorporation of the helical compression spring 44. It can be seen that when the spring retainer 32B is placed on top of the spring retainer 32A in this longitudinal position, the gap GA aligns with the gap GB. Under these circumstances, the projection 40A faces the projection 42B and the projection 42A faces the projection 40B. As a result, one end of the helical compression spring 44 can be threaded onto adjacent projections ~~40A/42B~~40A and 42B via the gaps GA and GB ~~GA/GB~~, and the helical compression spring 44 can then be compressed so that its other end can be threaded onto adjacent projections ~~42A/40B~~42A and 40B. After the helical compression spring 44 has been threaded and released, the resilient assembly 30 will spring to its at rest working length L.

Please amend paragraph 31 as follows:

Figures 7 and 8 show further embodiments of spring retainers 32A1 and 32B1 according to the invention. In this embodiment, the spring retainer 32B1 is identical to the spring retainer 32A1. Further, the external profile and the end hole 33A1 of the spring retainer 32A1 is identical to the spring retainer 32A described above and the shape of the recess 38A1 is identical to the shape of the recess 38A described above. However, it should be noted that the positions of the long and short projections 42A1 and 40A1 have been reversed when compared with the spring retainer 32A described in the previous embodiment. More particularly, the short projection 40A1 in this embodiment is near the hole 33A1, and the long projection 42A1 is remote from the hole 33A1.

Please amend paragraph 32 as follows:

The helical compression spring 44 can be assembled onto the spring retainers 32A1 and 32B1 by aligning the gaps GA1 and GB1. Figure 8 shows that in this case, when the resilient assembly 30 is at a rest condition, the gap GA1 sits to the right of the gap GB1 when considering Figure 8. The corresponding position of the gaps GA and GB of Figure 6 should be contrasted with Figure 8.

Please amend paragraph 33 as follows:

By arranging the long and short projections 42A1 and 40A1 in this manner, the long projection 42A1 will always overlap with the long projection 42B1 under any tensile load, thus ensuring that the helical compression spring 44 cannot escape when the resilient assembly 30 is under tensile load.

Please amend paragraph 34 as follows:

It can be seen that the present invention provides for a resilient assembly 30 that can act in tension. The inventive device does not have the hooked ends of known tension springs and therefore does not suffer from breakage at the ends of the helical compression spring 44. Furthermore, the present application is not limited by the physical characteristics of the resilient member.

Please amend paragraph 35 as follows:

It can be seen that, where a preload is required, the amount of preload is no longer limited by the manufacturing techniques used to make the helical compression spring 44. Rather the preload is determined by the relationship between the free, uncompressed length of the helical compression spring 44 and the distance between the spring seats of the spring retainer.

Please amend paragraph 36 as follows:

Note that in further embodiments it is possible to have differing spring retainers where the distance between the spring seats in one retainer is defined as D, and the distance between the corresponding spring seats on the second retainer is greater than D. In this way, there will be lost motion between the second retainer and the helical compression spring 44. Nevertheless, when the resilient ~~means~~member is preloaded, and once the lost motion has been taken up, the device as a whole is preloaded.

Please amend paragraph 37 as follows:

In further embodiments, the distance between the spring seats on both the retainers could equal the free length of the helical compression spring 44. Such a device would have no preload and also no lost motion. In other embodiments, the distance between the spring seats on both the spring retainers could be larger than the free length of the helical compression spring 44. Such a device would have lost motion between the spring retainers, and even when the lost motion is taken up, there would be no preload.

Please amend paragraph 38 as follows:

It should be noted that the resilient assembly 30, in addition to acting in tension, can act in compression. However, if a compressive load that is less than the preload in the helical compression spring 44 is applied to the resilient assembly 30, the resilient assembly 30 will not compress.

Please amend paragraph 39 as follows:

It will be appreciated that each end of the helical compression spring 44 loosely abuts with its corresponding spring seat and is not glued or otherwise permanently attached to the spring seat. Indeed, where the resilient assembly 30 acts in both compression and tension, the helical compression spring 44 may disengage from the spring seats 41A and 41B.

Please amend paragraph 40 as follows:

It will be apparent that with sufficient tension applied to the holes 33A and 33B, the helical compression spring 44 may become coil bound and the resilient assembly 30 may in effect become a solid link. This can be advantageous under certain circumstances. Furthermore, with sufficient compressive force applied to the holes 33A and 33B, the helical compression spring 44 may again become coil bound and again the resilient assembly 30 may act as a solid link in compression. This can be advantageous in certain circumstances.

Please amend paragraph 41 as follows:

The use of the present invention in a door latch assembly will now be described with respect to Figures 9 through 11. Figures 9 through 11 illustrates part of a vehicle door latch mechanism in various stages of operation, where Figure 9 shows the vehicle door latch mechanism in a locked and latched position, Figure 10 shows the vehicle door latch mechanism in an unlocked and latched position, and Figure 11 shows the vehicle door latch mechanism in an unlocked and released position. The resilient assembly 30 in the vehicle door latch mechanism is preloaded, and a force used to move a ~~block arm~~lock lever 22 from the unlocked position shown in Figure 10 to the locked position shown in Figure 9 is less than the preload force in the resilient assembly 30. Thus, when ~~the~~a release lever 10 is moved from the position shown in unlocked position in Figure 10 to the locked position shown in Figure 9, the resilient assembly 30 acts as a solid link 5. The arrangement and action of most of the operating parts of the vehicle door latch mechanism and their corresponding mounting structures in the door are of conventional construction well known to those skilled in the art.

Please amend paragraph 42 as follows:

However, a self-acting latching means incorporating the inventive resilient assembly 30 includes a rotating claw or other latch which, in use, co-operates with a striker on a vehicle door post. The claw is retainable in a fully closed and first safety condition by a co-acting pawl. The pawl is linked to a latch release member, such as ~~a~~the release lever 10 having a bell crank form, that is moveable about a release lever axis 12 on a support 8. In this example, the support 8 is in the form of a chassis of the latch. One portion 14 of the release lever 10 is linked (via a hole 14A) to a manually operable interior handle (not shown) of the door.

Please amend paragraph 43 as follows:

A second portion 16 of the release lever 10 is pivotally connected at 18 to the hole 33B at one end of the resilient assembly 30. The other end of the resilient assembly 30 is pivotally connected via the hole 33A at a point 19 to ~~a~~the lock lever 22. The lock lever 22 has a pivot 24 on the support 8.

Please amend paragraph 50 as follows:

From the unlocked latched state shown in Figure 10, locking the door entails rotating the release lever 10 clockwise to the position shown in Figure 9. This causes the resilient assembly 30 to act in compression and push the lock lever 22 clockwise to the position shown in Figure 9. Because of the preload force in the resilient assembly 30, the resilient assembly 30 acts a solid link when moving from the position shown in Figure 10 to the position shown in Figure 9.